Mr. A. Sankara Poduval.—The rule does not so exclude.

President.—It is excluded by the word "clear".

Supplementary Grants.

7.—Excise—Refunds—Rs. 1,072.

Mr. M. P. Cherian.—I rise to re-move for an additional allotment of Rs. 1,072. There was a short delivery of 400 bags of salt at Malippuram on 9th April 1933 out of 7,488 bags shipped from Bombay. The contractor was paid the bill of salt delivered after deducting the duty on the short delivery. As per the agreement the contractor is to pay us the duty on salt short delivered. This condition was laid down with a view to prevent the illegal disposal of salt on the way by the contractor. The contractor subsequently represented that the short delivery was due to the sinking of cargo boats on account of rough weather when the salt was transferred from the steamer. The loss of 350 bags was proved by the Port-Officer and Government Surveyor. They assessed the loss at 98 per cent. The loss of 50 bags was not proved. We have already realised the duty on the salt short delivered. We propose to refund the duty on salt proved to have been lost. It comes to Rs. 1,071—14—0. There is no provision in the budget. There is a slight mistake in the printed note. It states that the value is to be refunded. We have not realised the value on the salt short delivered but only the duty. It is the duty that is proposed to be refunded.

Motion No. 1.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan.—Sir, I move that.

The allotment be reduced by Re. 1.

The object with which I sent this cut motion, as stated in the cut motion paper is:—

To request the Government that the conduct of traders in selling salt at prices higher than the price at which they ought to sell must be taken serious note of by the Government and that they may be pleased to do all that is necessary to prevent such conduct on the part of the traders in future.

In recent days salt was as a matter of fact sold at higher prices than before was made evident from a notification issued by the Department. I do not think that the Government has hither to taken any action against the traders concerned. Under similar circumstances, I read in the papers, the Travancore Government booked the offenders concerned, a few of them. My prayer through this cut motion is that even if the Government did not take the necessary steps to book the offenders now, they may take the necessary steps to see that the traders behave properly and do not sell this article which is required by everybody at any price higher than what it ought to be sold. With this object in view I move that the amount be reduced by Re. 1.

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Mr. M. P. Cherian.—Sir, I admit that some of the merchants increased the price of salt for a few days when the Imperial Budget was presented before the Assembly, under the wrong impression that the duty on salt had been increased. When I came to know of this I at once published a notification in the Gazette. After a few days the prices came down. Therefore there is no necessity now to fix the price of salt. Unless the Diwan published a notification fixing the price of salt, the offenders could not be booked. If there is any further occasion to do so, we will fix the maximum price and publish a notification in the Gazette to that effect.

Mr. A. Sankara Poduval.—Sir, in regard to this matter the minutes of the Standing Finance Committee show that the Members pointed out that the refund, if any, need be made only if the contractor ...

Rama Varmha Tampuran.—It is not on that point that he has moved the cut motion. We are now on the cut motion.

Mr. A. Sankara Poduval.—Excuse me, Sir.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan.—Sir, is it within the power of the department to fix the price?

Mr. M. P. Cherian.—There is a Proclamation allowing the Diwan to fix the price of commodities including salt.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan.—May I know any particular instance mentioned in the notification, by which the traders were selling salt something higher than the price at which they ought to sell?

Mr. M. P. Cherian.—We have not now fixed the price at which the merchants are to sell salt. Some merchants raised the price by 4 or 5 annas per bag. That is only my private information.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan.—Sir, am I to take it that the Government allows these traders to sell salt as they please?

Mr. M. P. Cherian.—At present they can fix their own price. But we have large number of salt merchants every where. Recently at Trippunithura the merchants raised the price of salt. One of the merchants was induced to get down salt directly from Malipuram. He did not raise the price and then others also reduced the rate.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan.—Sir, I do not press it.

Motion was, with leave withdrawn.

Motion No. 2.

Mr. A. Eachara Menon.—Sir, I was prompted to send up this cut motion under a wrong impression. Therefore I do not move it.

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Hence the following motion was considered withdrawn.

Mr. A. Eachara Menon:—*To omit the whole allotment of Rs. 1,072 under 7—Excise—refunds.*

Mr. A. Sankara Poduval.—Sir, I want to know what action has been taken with regard to this matter, whether the contractors' losses have been fully compensated by the Insurance Company.

Mr. M. P. Cherian.—The shipments were insured. It is not a question of loss to the contractor. That does not concern us. We are realising duty on the assumption that the contractor sold or otherwise disposed of the quantity of salt that was missing. It is only to prevent that that we realise the duty. Now that the Port Officer and the Government surveyor testified to its being actually lost we propose to refund the duty we have collected.

Mr. A. Sankara Poduval.—Did the contractor get any compensation from the Insurance Company for the loss?

Mr. M. P. Cherian.—Government need not enquire into the private contract between the contractor and the company.

Demand put and carried.

1 A—7—Excise—Local Allowance—Rs. 156.

Mr. M. P. Cherian.—Sir, I rise to move for an additional grant of Rs. 156 under 7—Excise—Local allowance. Two preventive outposts were opened—one at Vaniampara in Edavam 1108 and the other at Velanthavalam from 1st Chingam 1109 to check and prevent illicit traffic in tobacco, salt and other excisable articles. Vaniampara and Velanthavalam being special tracts, the orderlies stationed there are entitled to get local allowance under the C. S. R. for which an amount of Rs. 156 is necessary in the current year. Specific provision for this expenditure has not been made in the current year's budget. Hence the additional expenditure has become necessary. I request the House to sanction the allotment.

Demand put and carried.

2. 11—Tramway—E—VII—Rs. 345—2—10.

Mr. T. Narayana Menon.—Sir, I rise to move for an additional allotment of Rs. 345—2—10 under 11—Tramway E-VII. The necessity for this demand has been explained in the note on the subject that has been circulated among the Hon'ble Members. I request that the House may be pleased to sanction the allotment.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan.—Sir, I find from the minutes of the Standing Finance Committee that the item was explained by the Tramway Engineer who was present. May I know what the explanation was?

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